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Governor

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**Secretary Roberta Gassman, State Representative Josh
Zepnick Present \$75,000 to Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett for
New Workforce Development Initiative**

Milwaukee - Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman presented Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett with \$75,000 today for funding to boost workforce development efforts in the city. State Representative Josh Zepnick also attended on behalf of the Governor's Council on Workforce Investment.

Milwaukee currently faces an unprecedented boom in construction, a transition to advanced manufacturing, diversification of the regional economy, and an aging workforce, all contributing to job opportunities for skilled workers. Development of the city's workforce is crucial for regional economic growth and the city's future prosperity.

As part of his *Grow Wisconsin* initiative, Governor Doyle set aside \$1 million of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds for distressed communities experiencing higher rates of unemployment or other employment dislocations. DWD will contract with the City of Milwaukee to hire a Workforce Development Policy Advisor to build a nationally recognized model of workforce development for the Milwaukee region.

"The Mayor's Office is uniquely positioned to provide the leadership for workforce development in the city and the surrounding region. Mayor Barrett and his team can provide the catalyst to bring resources to the table. They recognize that we must meet the needs of business, labor and the community for workforce development to be successful," said Secretary Gassman.

State Representative Josh Zepnick, a member of the Governor's Council on Workforce Investment, stated, "I am pleased the Council on Workforce Investment has encouraged the Mayor's Office to be the nucleus of workforce development efforts in this area and has encouraged the local workforce development boards to join with the Mayor to develop a comprehensive plan for the city."

The Office of Mayor Tom Barrett will lead regional efforts:

- To work with national consultants on the design of effective, demand-driven, workforce development systems in other major urban areas;
- To conduct interviews with other major employers, business, labor, and civic leaders on the development of an effective workforce system for the Milwaukee region;
- To work with local consultants to obtain input from community, family, and corporate foundations on the design of an effective system;
- To develop recommendations for the coordination of all workforce development funding streams at the local level.